



## *The President's Daily Brief*

~~*Top Secret*~~ 11 September 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S  
DAILY BRIEF  
11 SEPTEMBER 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -  
Soviet Union

Premier Cernik's trip to Moscow lasted only seven hours, and his list of accomplishments seems to have been even shorter. A communiqué indicates Cernik discussed the Moscow agreement with Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny, but it sheds little further light on the political side of the talks.

On economic questions, the Soviets did promise to build another gas pipeline for Czechoslovakia, but apparently not much else. There seemed to be no meeting of minds on what the Czechoslovaks were most interested in: reparations for damages caused by the occupation or a Soviet hard currency credit.

National Assembly President Smrkovsky has told a steelworkers' rally that every detail of the Moscow agreement must be carried out. In the next breath, however, he promised that the Dubcek leadership would go on pushing internal reform and that there would be no persecution of intellectuals. Smrkovsky and other leaders in Prague have been pressing this theme recently, partly to persuade the many Czechoslovaks abroad to come home.

The cabinet, meanwhile, met to discuss some of the liberal reforms Dubcek proposed last April. Among other things, it approved a bill which calls for the continued subordination of all political groups to the Communist-controlled National Front. The bill does not rule out, however, the addition of new political organizations to the Front.

## 2. Soviet Union

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## 3. Communist China

Peking last week finally announced the formation of revolutionary committees for Tibet and Sinkiang, thus completing the process for all provinces. The new committees both seem to be patchwork jobs in which radical and moderate elements are well represented. Their establishment has long been delayed, in part because local military authorities were split over which rival Red Guard factions to support in each province.

The fact that the top leadership in Peking was also unable to come down in favor of one faction or the other shows that divisions at the center persist.

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Authorities in Szechwan Province, China's largest grain producer, have called on the army to enforce collection of the fall harvest. This is the first time since the dark years immediately following collapse of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 that the army has had to be used to pry grain loose from the peasants.

Last year the harvest was so bountiful that food production held up despite the Cultural Revolution. This year deficit provinces will feel the pinch because the crop is just average and imports from abroad are lagging.

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4. Congo  
(Brazzaville)

The fog appears to be lifting a bit. Army strongman Ngouabi seems to be gathering in the reins of power at the expense of rival military leaders.

President Massamba-Debat is still under heavy army guard at his palace while Ngouabi works out an alliance with ultraleftist civilians. So far, however, the new government has only made moderate-sounding pro-French public noises.

5. Iraq

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY*

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S  
Political Attitudes



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**Special Daily Report on North Vietnam  
for the President's Eyes Only**

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**I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION**

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Logistics: Severe weather has apparently disrupted Communist supply movements in the Laos pan-handle and coastal North Vietnam south of Vinh.

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Hanoi's Treatment of Premier's Speech: An authoritative commentary in Nhan Dan on 10 September is typical of the twist the Communists have been giving Premier Pham Van Dong's National Day speech on 2 September. Dong's speech took a generally hard line and promised nothing new in terms of substance, but he did offer new semantic variations in the Communist formulations on two sticky issues: the question of North Vietnamese reciprocity for a US bombing halt and the role of the Liberation Front in negotiations. These are the aspects which have been picked up in subsequent commentaries. The Communists clearly want Dong's words to be taken as a significant modification in the North Vietnamese position.

Dong said that a bombing halt would have a "positive effect on the seeking, step by step, of a political settlement." This idea is not new, but it is a more attractive casting than the usual Communist formulation. The North Vietnamese have occasionally used this kind of language privately, but this is the first time an authoritative spokesman has done so publicly. They may be hoping that this language will be interpreted as a commitment to respond appropriately to a bombing halt, but that at the same time it will allow them to avoid backtracking on the issue of reciprocity. Dong's words also avoid binding North Vietnam to any specific military course after the bombing stops.

In speaking of the Liberation Front, Dong did not insist that the Front had to be recognized as the "sole" or even the "genuine" representative of the

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South Vietnamese. There was no talk of it having a "decisive voice" in any settlement, nor any demand that the settlement be in accord with its political program. Dong said only that the US must recognize and talk with the Front on problems involving South Vietnam. This language leaves a place for the Front as the Communist representative on matters affecting South Vietnam, but other parties are not excluded on either side.

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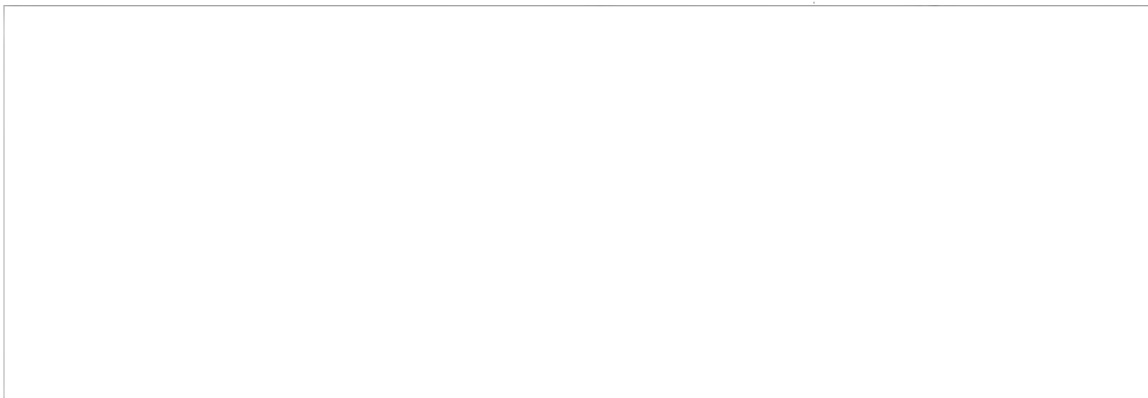
North Vietnamese Economic Policy: Hanoi on 30 August broadcast the text of a long speech by Le Duan on economic policy. Le Duan seems to regard regional industries as the main hope for satisfying the demand for consumer goods as well as the "first link" in the task of "economy building." In agriculture, he set forth five tons of paddy rice per hectare (about two and one-half acres), one laborer per hectare, and two pigs per hectare as goals for the near future, and specified that better organization of labor--to eliminate lax discipline--and improved farm implements are to be the keys to these goals.

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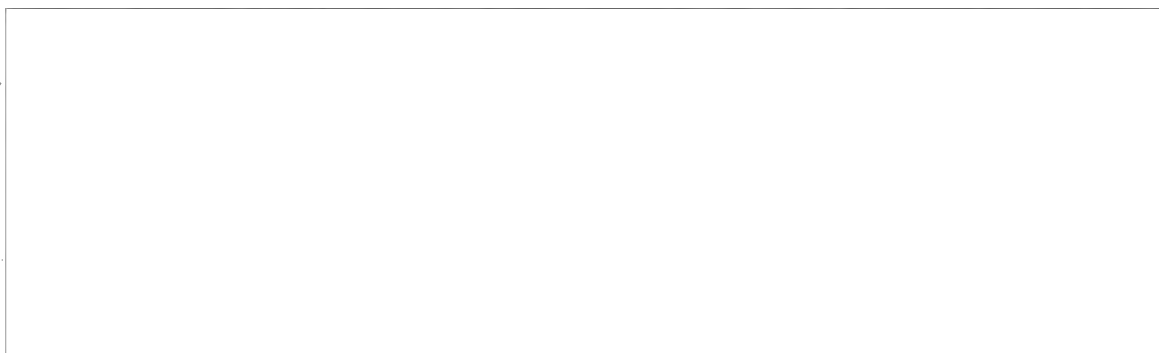
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**II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR**



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